

THE SITUATION OF THE JEWS
IN POLAND.

(By Dr. Gotthard Deutsch.)

Facts and Reports.

Under severe mental stress people cannot be expected to be accurate in figures. The town of Austin, Pa., was flooded by the bursting of a dam, Sept. 30th, 1911. On the first day, following the catastrophe, the papers reported: "900 of the inhabitants are known to have perished." On the fourth day we learned: "The total number of known dead stands at 38." One must not forget that murder on a large scale will create a much greater excitement, and therefore the occasional exaggeration in the number of victims is not due, as the apologists of Poland like to make it, to an intention of blackening the reputation of a nation struggling for independence. An Associated Press Dispatch on Nov. 29th, 1918, reported that in the course of pogroms perpetrated in Lemberg, Nov. 22 and 24th, 1100 Jews lost their lives. A correspondent to the London "Times," Dec. 23rd, claims that these figures were greatly exaggerated and he presents the whole incident as a political contest due to the demand of the Jews for recognition as a separate nationality and to their hostility to the independence of Poland.

What Are the Facts.

Eastern Galicia is Ruthenian. The Ruthenians are a Slavic race, speaking the Little Russian language, a dialect akin to the Russian, and most of them belong to the Greek Orthodox Church, altho one section, the Uniats, recognize the supremacy of the Pope.

They are both in language and religion different from the Poles, and, to some extent from the Russians. The Poles suppressed them, and for centuries they were fighting for their independence. On such occasions, notably in the Cossack rebellion of 1648 the Jews were the main victims. History repeated itself after 270 years in a remarkably accurate manner.

Lemberg.

The city of Lemberg, the capital of the former Austrian province of Galicia, is the center of a Ruthenian (now usually called Ukrainian) territory. As the capital of the province, and because of its importance otherwise, the population is predominately Polish. The Poles, possessing the political control, filled the city with Polish officials, and besides they stand culturally higher than the Ukrainians and therefore predominate in professions, commerce and industry, even in Ruthenian districts, possessing further, owing to absentee landlordism, dating from feudal times, the control of the landed estates.

"So the city of Lemberg has 50 per cent Poles, 30 per cent Jews and 20 per cent Ruthenians. The latter with the support of the surrounding country population occupied the city, Nov. 1, 1918. The Jews were in a quandary. Ideas, as those which guide the views of a new country like U. S. or of a country where the citizenship has in course of time become homogeneous like Italy, are not applicable to eastern Europe. There religion, language and historic antecedents form a distinctive national character. The Jews could neither be Poles nor Ruthenians without being considered allies

of the enemy by the other side and without bringing vengeance upon their brethren in the other territory. They decided to remain neutral, obtaining from both parties, Poles and Ruthenians, the recognition as such. Guided by officers who were seasoned by four years of experience in the Austrian army, they staked off a neutral territory, organized a police force for the protection of this neutral zone against marauders, and observed strict neutrality in the fight between the two nationalities, in spite of numerous instances of suspicious "misunderstandings" of which Jews became the victims. Finally on Friday, Nov. 22, the Poles became masters of the situation, the Jewish guard was disarmed, and a regular massacre began which was continued on the next day. Murder, pillage and arson were the sport with which the victorious troops were entertained. "The boys were to have a good time" after three weeks of hard fighting. The most atrocious incident was the setting on fire of a synagogue filled with worshippers, who believed that the Poles, proud of their loyalty to their Catholic religion, would respect this place. Members of the leading classes of the Polish population, including many women, enjoyed from a distance the beautiful spectacle of the fire the enchanting music of the cries of the agonized victims. The "Neues Wiener Journal" of Feb. 14th, 1919, gives the number of dead as 73 and the number of wounded as 443 of whom 71 are children.

The Ruthenian Side.

Speaking broadly, the Ruthenians are more friendly to the Jews than

the Poles, altho the Jews, representing the merchant and professional classes, were in Galicia siding with the Poles and in Russia with the Russians, even in Ukrainian territory. The Ukrainian leaders, however, feel the need of a merchant and professional class, and therefore arrived from the start at an understanding with the Jews to whom group rights were granted and who individually were trusted with prominent positions in the new republic. The masses are evidently not equally broad, as would appear natural in a backward people. This accounts for the massacres in Ukraine, notably in Proskurov, Feb. 15th, 1919, where 400 families are said to have been exterminated. Similar reports come from Stryj, Tarnopol, and other cities of Galicia, as well as from the Russian province of Podolis.

(Continued next week.)

+ LOCKHART +

Mrs. McCaudless of Los Cruces, New Mexico, has arrived to visit her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Lissner remain with her father who is quite ill.

Miss Gertie Goldberg of Chicago, is the guest of the P. Schwarz family.

Mr. Chas. Straus spent the week end with his wife and baby.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Weinbaum left this week for Chicago, and other points.

Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Lissner are (Continued on page 15)

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